

West Coast Terror

(The following editorial appeared in the Washington Post, May 7, 1945).

"In California, since the beginning of this year, there have been 16 shooting incidents--directed at American subjects of Japanese ancestry. The Americans who were made the target of this terror had returned to their homes with the expressed permission of the United States army. Their loyalty had been carefully scrutinized and certified by army authorities. Some of them had been honorably discharged from the army itself. Some had been released from the camps of the War Relocation authority after the Supreme Court of the United States had declared the detention of loyal citizens on grounds of race to be unconstitutional. These Americans are being persecuted because of their racial background--in the same way and for just the same reasons that prompted the Nazi persecution of racial minorities. When we gaze at German atrocities, we might cast a backward glance at these atrocities of our own.

A California jury has acquitted three men who were charged with having planted a dynamite bomb on the farm of Sumio Doi, recently released from a relocation camp. We do not know the details of the evidence against these men. But we do know that the presiding judge permitted the introduction of questions respecting the validity of Doi's purchase of his ranch under the California Alien Land act and that the defense attorney was allowed to tell the jury, "this is a white man's country. Let's keep it so." We had supposed that "trials" of this character had ended with the collapse of Hitler's fortress.

"These atrocities have been happening not far from San Francisco, where the representatives of 48 nations--comprising people of every race and color--are striving to create a new organization to keep the peace. They besmirch our principles and our pretensions. They are perpetrated, to be sure, by no more than a few bigoted hoodlums. Nevertheless, they do injury to us all--not only to our good name but also to the institutions upon which our own secure and orderly way of life is founded. If California authorities cannot uphold the law and protect the citizens of their own state, they should call for help from the federal government. Terrorism is no less ugly at home than abroad.